

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 9905

EXDIS

FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (PRESIDENT CARTER)
SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL VISIT: SCHEDULE --SPEECH FORUM

REF: STATE 242252

1. I VERY MUCH AGREE THAT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE AND VERY APPROPRIATE FOR THE PRESIDENT TO MAKE THE KIND OF SPEECH ENVISAGED IN CARACAS. I SO RECOMMEND.

2. THE CHOICE OF A FORUM IS CIRCUMSCRIBED BY THE TIGHT SCHEDULE WE HAVE. IF WE CANNOT TOUCH THE PRIVATE TIME OF 5 TO 7:30 THAN THE ONLY PRACTICAL SUITABLE OCCASION IS THE STATE BANQUET (AS EXPLAINED BELOW), WHICH IS A FEASIBLE FORUM. IF WE COULD STRETCH THE AFTERNOON "WINDOW" TO THREE HOURS BY CUTTING INTO THE PRIVATE TIME, THEN WE COULD SCHEDULE A SUITABLE SPEECH EVENT; IN THIS CASE, HOWEVER, THE ONLY APPROPRIATE EFFECTIVE FORUM WOULD BE THE CONGRESS FOR THE REASONS EXPLAINED BELOW.

3. THE PRESIDENT HAS ONLY ONE AFTERNOON EFFECTIVELY AVAILABLE FOR THE WHOLE VIST. WITH PART OF THAT BLOCKED
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CARACA 09905 101658Z

OUT BY THE RESERVED PRIVATE TIME TO 5-7:30, WE HAVE LEFT ONLY A "WINDOW" OF TWO HOURS FROM ROUGHLY 2:30 TO 4:30. PRESIDENT PEREZ IS ANXIOUS TO HAVE A COMPREHENSIVE BILATERAL WORKING SESSION WITH ADVISERS; TO HIM THIS IS THE CENTER-PIECE FOR THE VISIT AND HE WOULD RESIST AND BE UPSET BY ANY REPLACEMENT OR CURTAILMENT OF IT. AND THERE IS NOWAY, COUNTING TRAVEL TIME, THAT WE CAN COMBINE AND COMPRESS ANY

SATISFACTORY SPEECH EVENT AND BUSINESS SESSION TOGETHER INTO THIS RELATIVELY BRIEF PERIOD.

4. THEREFORE, THE ONLY SUITABLE OCCASION LEFT IS THE STATE DINNER. THIS IS QUITE SUITABLE OCCASION AND FORUM. OTHER CHIEFS OF STATE AND DISTINGUISHED VISITORS HAVE USED THE STATE DINNER FOR THEIR MAJOR STATEMENTS. THE GOV COULD SHAPE THE DINNER AROUND THE IDEA; IT COULD BE COVERED BY LIVE TV AND THE GUEST LIST CHOSEN ACCORDINGLY.

5. ALTERNATIVELY, IF IT WERE POSSIBLE TO USE PART OF THE RESERVED TIME, WE COULD SCHEDULE A SEPARATE SPEECH EVENT. THIS WOULD HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF GIVING THE PRESIDENT MORE PUBLIC EXPOSURE (TWO PUBLIC EVENTS RATHER THAN JUST THE ONE STATE DINNER). IN THIS CASE, THE ONLY SUITABLE AND APPROPRIATE FORM WOULD BE THE CONGRESS. UNIVERSITIES ARE NOT RPT NOT APPROPRIATE FORA IN CARACAS, AND WOULD PRESENT PALPABLE SECURITY RISKS. THE GOV WOULD RESIST ANY UNIVERSITY APPEARANCE. THERE IS NO OTHER CIVIC FORUM THAT IS AS APPROPRIATE, PRESTIGIOUS AND ACCEPTABLE IN THE VENEZUELAN MILIEU AS THE CONGRESS.

6. IN THIS DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY, A CONGRESSIONAL FORM IS MOST SUITABLE. THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH IS A REAL AND EFFECTIVE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT; IT IS PRESTIGIOUS AND POPULAR. ALMOST ALL VISITING CHIEFS OF STATE HAVE MET

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 CARACA 09905 101658Z

WITH IT. A CONGRESSIONAL APPEARANCE WOALD COMMAND A SIGNIFICANT NATIONAL (AND IN THIS CASE INTERNATIONAL) AUDIENCE. IN THE SCHEDULE, THEN WE COULD PROGRAM A VISIT TO CONGRESS IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE WORKING BILATERAL WITH PEREZ (OR REVERSE THE TWO), AND THE COMBINED EVENTS COULD BE COMPLETED BY 5:30 OR 6:00 PM.

7. IN SUMMARY, THEREFORE, I RECOMMEND THAT WE BE ALLOWED TO CUT INTO RESERVED PRIVATE TIME AND PROGRAM A VISIT AND SPEECH TO THE CONGRESS IN ADDITION TO THE BILATERAL WORKING SESSION. IF THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE, THAN I RECOMMEND THE STATE DINNER AS FORUM.

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